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VII.—*Three New Types.*

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THE time has come for urging the adoption in common print of the new types which are necessary to denote the elementary sounds of our language.

Three original Roman letters, A O V, now give us the types for six elementary vowels, as in far fast, at fare, obey go, nor, full rule, but bur.

It is the common way with nations using the Roman alfabet to use the same letter for an elementary sound when prolonged as when quickly uttered, even tho the sound becomes weaker or narrower as it is drawn out; *full* and *rule*, *but* and *bur* go together; a diacritic is added when we have occasion to distinguish.

But with advancing nations variations of articulation pass these bounds. Periods of great deeds, great national efforts expand the speech, and the thinkers and writers of the following age need to enlarge the alfabet.

So for example the generation that followed the Elizabethan age worked over the spelling, and among other changes they found that *i* and *u* each represented two sounds, a vowel and a consonant, and each had two forms, *i* and *j*, *u* and *v*. They differentiated by using *j* and *v* always for the consonant sounds, *i* and *u* only for the vowels; and so two letters were added to the alfabet.

The introduction of a new letter in common printing, in newspapers, or literature, is a matter of great difficulty. Many things are necessary to make a good working type. Many generations of type founders have used their best powers in bringing the Roman types to perfection. A type that will not look out of place, a raw recruit, is not easy to invent. Then each word has its own personality to the reader's eye; putting in new types changes the picture. We carry words

with us as pictures, and a changed picture balks the reader, or diverts him.

These difficulties were avoided in the differentiation of the semivowels; all of the types *i j u v* were familiar and each used with a familiar power, so that it is not strange that under the guidance of the great scholar, Philemon Holland, and the Cambridge editions of the new translation of the Bible (King James's), the new letters were completely established in a single generation.

A similar procedure may give us the new letters now needed. There are two forms of *a* in familiar use, the old *a* which we use in script and italics and know in Greek and German, and the Roman *a*. A new type "a" made to match the lowercase Roman forms, may be used for "a" whenever it sounds like *a* in *far*, and give us a new letter that will cause no embarrassment to any reader. There are two forms also of *u*, the lowercase *u* and the small capital *U*. A new type like the small capital to match the lowercase forms, and used only for the *u*'s which have the sound of *but*, *burn*, will give us a manageable new letter for the alphabet. And an *O* like a script *o* with a curve like a drooping breve, and used only for *o*'s which sound like the "o" in *not*, *nor*, will do for the third new letter which our alphabet demands.

The Scientific alphabet in which these new types are used was promulgated by the American Philological Association in 1877. They have been thoroughly tested as part of a key alphabet for all alphabetic languages. (See plates and exposition in Funk & Wagnalls' Standard Dictionary.) They raise to their proper prominence the free middle tones in which, as Grimm declares, the English surpasses all other languages. They work well in the alphabet of English literature and of every day use.

Much has been done by the last generation to simplify the spelling of anomalous words, but any one who uses one of these types in a book, or article, or advertisement, will do as much for good English as he who adopts a hundred corrected words in old types from the goodly lists of the 3500 presented in the Century and Webster.